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AUTHOR Hahn, Alan J.
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ABSTRACT

A new planning and development approach is emerging in the five county Central New York region, an area having a highly complex, fluid, and ill-coordinated decision making structure. Three regional agencies are active here: the Metropolital Development Association of Syracuse and Onondaga County; the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board; and the experimental MIDNY (Mid-New York) Project. MIDNY, which stresses educational aspects of community development, was founded to explore ways in which Cooperative Extension could be more effective in urbanizing areas. MIDNY has a flexible, pragmatic "unwritten philosophy" expressed in continuously evolving procedures. Its techniques are dissemination of information, concepts, ideas, and timely news by memos to professionals; outreach to the general public through radio and telvision; regional meetings and conferences; program planning in conjunction with county extension offices; and work with other organizations and agencies. Needs in such areas as local program planning, liaison of individuals and organizations, involvement of more diverse groups, community development training for extension agents, "do it yourself" information for new planning boards, and consultative aid to the regional planning board, were noted during the initial period (1966-68). (LY)

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Regional Development Studies

ORGANIZATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

THE MIDNY EXPERIENCE: 1966-68

by
Alan J. Hahn

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Department of Rural Sociology
Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station
New York State College of Agriculture
A Statutory College of the State University
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

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Alan J. Hahn

The author is Assistant Professor of Consumer Economics and Public Policy, New York State College of Human Ecology, Cornell University, Ithaca.

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Department of Rural Sociology
New York State College of Agriculture
Cornell University
Ithaca, New York

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The purpose of this paper is to describe an approach to development and planning in an urbanized and growing region. The paper is divided into three main parts. The first is a description of the region, including its highly complex decision-making structure. The second part describes the responses of three regional agencies---an economic development association, a regional planning board, and an adult education project concerned with community development. In the final part, the response of the last agency, the MIDNY*Project (the one with which I am most familiar) will be described and analyzed in greater detail.

No claim is made that this case is typical. Its major interest lies, I believe, in the agencies' serious attempt to deal with the complex, disjointed, incremental[1] nature of decision-making in the region.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE REGION

Contrast with Economic Development Districts

The problems of the Central New York region are not those of economic development districts. It is not rural, isolated, or depressed. The region---with Syracuse at its center and including the counties of Onondaga, Cayuga, Cortland, Madison, and Oswego---is strategically located at the intersection of major east-west and north-south transportation routes. It has been growing rapidly and is expected to continue to grow. The population of the region was 680,000 in 1960, nearly 740,000 in 1965, and is expected to surpass 1 million by 1980.[2]

If structural differentiation is the measure of development,[3] then by this measure, too, Central New York does not suffer from lack of development. Whether one counts roles or major institutions or the

*The MIDNY Project is a pilot project exploring the adaptation of Cooperative Extension community resource development programs. "MIDNY" is an acronym for "Mid-New York."

number of special interests represented in its decision-making structure, the region is highly specialized and differentiated.

What may be lacking---and here is where the role of regional planning and development agencies is assumed to lie---are (a) sufficient linkages among the differentiated special interests and (b) sufficient perception of the relationship of the entire five-county region to the growth center, Syracuse. The former is probably taken to be the greater problem. The creation of the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board in 1966 was the culmination of the recognition of the latter problem. Since then, the former problem---linkages among special interests ---has emerged as the Planning Board's central concern and also the concern of the other two regional agencies to receive attention in this paper.

Character and Extent of Urbanization in the Region

The complexity of the region stems primarily from the metropolitan nature of the Syracuse area, of course; but there are also other causes. The region is very large in area relative to the size of Syracuse, or the "urbanized area," or the "metropolitan area." In the peripheral parts of the region, the influence of Syracuse (by most measures) trails off dramatically or---what is more likely---is superceded by the influence of other urban centers (Rochester, Watertown, Utica, Norwich, Binghamton, Ithaca, and Seneca Falls). Furthermore, there are several subcenters in the region, the largest being the cities of Auburn, Oswego, Fulton, Cortland, and Oneida.

Consequently, any agency attempting to influence regional decision-making must deal not only with the typical complexity of a metropolis

like Syracuse, but also with (a) the smaller-scale complexity of other urban centers and (b) a wide variety of community types. There are big cities, middle-sized cities, and small towns; growing places and declining places; ghettoes, tract developments, and the exurbia of single-family homes scattered widely across the countryside; industrial areas, residences of well-to-do professionals, and some highly non-urban townships.

The mixed urbanization of the region can best be understood by knowing its general population history. The cities grew more or less steadily since their founding around the turn of the 19th century until 1920 or 1930, when their growth rates began to level off. The larger ones---Syracuse, Auburn, and Oswego---have lost population in recent decades. A few of the close-in towns, especially those adjacent to Syracuse, have followed similar population histories. The remaining towns have witnessed variations on an S-shaped population growth curve. Settled in the late 1700's as farming areas, their populations tended to peak around 1840. Then, with changes in agricultural technology and markets, their populations declined fairly steadily until 1920 or so. Since then, the population trend in these towns has been generally upward as increasing numbers of urbanites have chosen to live in the country and commute to work in the cities. The sharpness of these upward trends varies, of course, with proximity to Syracuse or some other urban center. Present populations in the closer-in towns exceed any previous population peaks; for those farther out, the circa-1840 peak may not have been re-attained yet. Finally, a few of the most isolated towns have shown very little recent increase at all.[4]

The Nature of Regional Decision-Making

This, then, is the situation in which the three regional agencies to be described in this paper must operate. The agencies---an economic development organization, the regional planning board, and an adult education project---all have as their ultimate objective influence of some type on regional decision-making. Therefore, a few paragraphs will be devoted to a sketch of the regional decision-making "system."[5]

First of all, there is the typical multiplicity of governmental units. New York, unlike many states farther west, still has a strong system of town governments. As E.A. Lutz has pointed out, the distinctions among towns, villages, counties, and cities in terms of powers and functions have become relatively insignificant.[6] This has resulted primarily from the dispersion of urban population throughout areas governed by the more "rural" units of government.

The five counties of Central New York include six city governments, 47 village governments, 94 towns, 56 school districts, and numerous and varied special districts.[7] While no careful survey has been made, it is surely safe to say that cooperation and coordination among these governmental units---while it certainly occurs---is haphazard and incomplete at best.

Furthermore, a simple enumeration of governmental units is no measure of the magnitude of any formal or informal coordination task. Within a single unit of government, the various departments and offices are rarely coordinated and are frequently in only imperfect communication with one another.

Agencies of the state and federal governments are also important parts of the regional decision-making structure---and probably increasingly

important parts.[8] Some of these agencies, like the State Department of Transportation, are action agencies. Some, like the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, are funding agencies. Others, like the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, are service agencies. Some operate solely out of Albany or Washington. Others have regional offices in Syracuse or, in the case of some federal agencies, New York City. While cooperation among these agencies is steadily improving, it is still notoriously weak.

If the public sector seems complex, the private sector must be far more difficult to coordinate. While there is no ready way of knowing how great an impact any given private firm has on the region, the fact that there are 68 manufacturing firms in the region employing 200 or more, and 15 employing 1,000 or more,[9] gives some inkling of the size of the private segment of the decision-making structure. These figures, counting only industrial firms, say nothing about retail and wholesale firms, or public utilities, nothing about real estate developers or financial institutions, and nothing about the dozen colleges and universities, which are turning more and more toward community involvement. The Metropolitan Development Association, the economic development organization discussed in this report, has some 100 members representing about 80 companies.[10] These figures may come as close as any readily available to an indication of the numbers involved in important regional decision-making. Even MDA, however, is heavily oriented to the Syracuse metropolitan area, so its membership list would not include many private sector leaders from outside Onondaga County.

Finally, no study of regional decision-making can ignore the many organizations that might be called quasi-public agencies. Among these

would be the Educational and Cultural Center for Onondaga and Oswego Counties, the Community Health Information and Planning Service, the Society for the Advancement of the Visual Environment, (ECCO, CHIPS, and SAVE), the Garden Center Association of Central New York, the Home Builders Association of Central New York, and the Syracuse Area Council of Churches. These are only examples of the range of organizations. In addition, there are nearly countless chambers of commerce; industrial promotion organizations; human rights groups; political clubs; community chests; professional societies of doctors, lawyers, realtors, social workers, etc.; PTAs; political pressure groups concerned with urban renewal, race relations, water supply, schools, hospitals, libraries, parks, and planned parenthood; taxpayers associations; community action programs; leagues of women voters; farmers' organizations; neighborhood associations; and many more.[11] In Syracuse, there is even a group (actually an umbrella agency for anti-poverty efforts) called the Organization of Organizations.

Partisan Mutual Adjustment

An accurate map or diagram of these decision-makers would be unbelievably complicated. Nearly all the organizations are special-interest groups of one kind or another. A few---most notably the Regional Planning Board---claim or attempt comprehensiveness. Many others have as their purpose the coordination of subordinate agencies in particular subject-matter areas, such as social welfare, health, religion, or industrial promotion. The levels of generality at which such coordination is attempted vary considerably, too. So, of course, does the autonomy of the agencies intended to be coordinated.

In addition, the geographical jurisdiction of the agencies varies. Some are nationwide, some statewide, some regional, some county, some town, village, or city. Some---many businesses, for instance---have worldwide jurisdictions or else it is meaningless to speak of their jurisdictions. Others---commercial establishments, for instance---would be more concerned with trade areas or other non-formalized jurisdictions. Water resource groups working within river basins are similar cases. School districts have boundaries that perversely follow approximately, but not exactly, town or county boundaries. Finally, there are multi-unit agencies covering areas other than the five counties themselves: areas smaller or larger or about the same size but imperfectly overlapping.

Coordination and even communication among the multitudes of regional decision-makers is, in short, rarely formalized; and, when it is, the extent to which everyone relevant is included varies widely. More often coordination and communication is informal, sketchy, incomplete, misunderstood, non-existent, or openly resisted.

In summary, Dennis Rondinelli's description of regional decision-making in general describes Central New York well:

> It can be hypothesized that the regional decision-making system is highly pluralistic, fragmented, and decentralized. A combination of private market investors, political organizations, civic leaders and groups, special interests, and semi-independent governmental units operating within limited substantive fields and limited geographical areas make operating and investment decisions which influence the development of the region as a whole. The mixed public-private sector policy-making system is influenced by both market and nonmarket forces. The system is dependent upon informal and formal interpersonal and intergroup connections, flows of information, and varying degrees of awareness of problems and self-interest. Nonmarket (political) decisions are reached through a network of communications, accommodation, and agreement which is always open to change if sufficient influence or political power can be mobilized through the formation of coalitions. The

process of mobilizing power and building coalitions takes place through what Charles Lindblom has termed 'partisan mutual adjustment.' Decisions are made on an incremental, marginal basis involving relatively small changes in a large body of previously settled policy. The lack of regional governmental structure or regional policy constituency makes the decision-making system relatively unstructured, open, and loose, allowing interests to form and re-form in response to specific regional and sub-regional decision issues.[12]

Positive Aspects of the Region

Despite the highly unstructured nature of decision-making in the region, Central New York does have a certain amount of built-in solidarity that makes improvement in the rationality of regional decision-making not a hopeless task.[13] As implied near the beginning of this paper, solidarity has existed in Syracuse and Onondaga County for quite a long time. That the common concerns of the city and the county are recognized by many is indicated by the large number of "city-county" and "greater Syracuse" organizations, and also by the many city functions that have been taken over by the county.[14] (Strangely, until the present, this has not included the planning function.)

The objective of the three agencies described in this report have included the expansion of this solidarity to include all five counties. There are obstacles and quiet resistances, but for reasons to be touched on below they are not overwhelming.

First, however, it should be noted that the Census-defined Syracuse SMSA includes three of the five counties, not all five. In terms of solidarity, however, the SMSA seems to be a less realistic regional unit than the entire five-county area. While Madison and Oswego Counties (constituting, with Onondaga, the SMSA) are clearly more heavily oriented toward Syracuse than Cayuga or Cortland, there are anomalies.

Madison also has a significant orientation to Utica-Rome outside Central New York, while Oswego has, in addition to heavy commuting to Onondaga County, substantial employment in its own cities of Fulton and Oswego.

The relative solidarity of the five-county area is vaguely evident in the attitudes of people throughout the region---in the varying, but almost ever-present, orientation to Syracuse either for regular shopping, for jobs, or at least for obtaining more specialized goods and services. Justification for these attitudes and orientations can be found, among other places, in commuting data.[15] While the pattern of labor sheds is complicated, and many residents work outside the five counties (in Utica and Ithaca especially), there are only a few places in the five counties that are clearly oriented outside the region rather than to either Syracuse or some other urban center <u>within</u> the region. (The most serious exceptions are southeastern Madison County and southwestern Cayuga County.)

As Pierre Clavel has hypothesized: "Effectiveness of linkage roles is related to the congruence of district boundaries with the limits of interaction within the system."[16] The validity of this hypothesis has already been suggested by success in establishing the Regional Planning Board, which was founded and funded by action of the Boards of Supervisors in each of the five counties. (The decision had its beginnings in the Metropolitan Development Association, which apparently saw the geographical area that needed to be influenced to be larger than its own jurisdiction of Syracuse and Onondaga County.) The further development of effective linkage roles is a major portion of the raison-d'etre of the three agencies that are the subjects of this paper: the Regional

Planning Board, MDA itself in its continuing work, and the MIDNY Project, which was established shortly after the Planning Board.

II. THREE REGIONAL AGENCIES

The Metropolitan Development Association

MDA, while not technically a five-county organization, has been concerned at least informally with conditions and events beyond the boundaries of its official jurisdiction, namely Syracuse and Onondaga County. It has stated its philosophy as follows:

> To meet the challenge of the year 2000, Syracuse must be not only attractive and profitable for industrial development, but it must become a new community created in accord with a grand and excellent design---with a strong urban center of commerce, government, and politics; attractive living space for all citizens, urban and suburban; strong and conveniently located facilities for culture, religion, health, education, and recreation; and development which will enhance and protect the natural beauty of the rolling land, lakes, streams, and rivers of the Central New York Region.[17]

The recognition implied here of the interrelationship of Syracuse with the surrounding region was surely a primary cause of MDA's involvement in the establishment of the Regional Planning Board. The initiation of the proposal for a Regional Planning Board came primarily from MDA; and its Executive Vice-President, John R. Searles, Jr., has been given credit for the successful "selling" of the proposal to the county Boards of Supervisors.[18]

MDA's major concern is admittedly with physical and economic development. "MDA recognizes that people are the community," its prospectus states, "but that people must have shops, recreational facilities, streets ---in short an excellent physical environment---and the community must be

built on thriving commercial, industrial, and governmental enterprise...."[19] Current and recent projects include: encouragement of industrial location and expansion in the Syracuse area; coordination and facilitation of the development of a major office facility (MONY Center) in downtown Syracuse; participation with city officials in various urban renewal efforts; attempts to resolve traffic and transportation problems in the Syracuse area; planning and preparing proposals for park, recreation, and cultural projects; and the sponsoring of various conferences and the publication of newsletters, promotional materials, etc.[20]

MDA, which was organized in 1959 by 50 businessmen as a non-profit corporation, sees itself as "a convener, not a loner. MDA's small technical staff strives to achieve the association's goals by working with other organizations, public and private, and by employing the best technical advice available."[21] In efforts to bring a proposed NASA electronics research laboratory to Onondaga County, for example, MDA worked in cooperation with the City-County Office for Economic Development, Syracuse University Research Corporation, the Chamber of Commerce, the Manufacturers Association, and the Area Development Department of Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation. Other economic development efforts have been carried out with all or some of these agencies, while other projects have brought MDA into cooperation with still other individuals and organizations---ranging from city and county officials to the regional Garden Center Association. MDA's role may be that of an initiator, or it may simply add its weight to efforts already underway by other groups. Sometimes it may attempt influence merely by providing information. On other occasions, it may be instrumental in the creation of an "interim committee," such as the one formed to consider the establishment of the Regional

Planning Board, or a group like "Citizens for Water," which spearheaded the campaign for approval of a $45 million metropolitan water supply system.

John Searles, the major individual force in MDA, often speaks of the disjointed, uncoordinated nature of planning and decision-making in Syracuse and Central New York. He has said he would prefer such comprehensive solutions as metropolitan government, but that he recognizes the impossibility of such measures, at least at the present time. MDA's approach to development, then, can be said to be one of selecting projects which are expected to have the greatest long-run payoffs and utilizing whatever techniques it has available to achieve the coordination and action necessary. The payoffs anticipated are not just direct economic ones, but also payoffs in terms of additional activity inspired by the specific project in question. As MDA's prospectus says, pointing to the Association's limited resources and membership, "MDA concentrates its resources on a limited number of carefully chosen objectives which it considers of key importance in triggering an upsurge of community enterprise...."[22] The techniques employed and the other agencies involved vary widely from issue to issue, depending on circumstances and practical needs.

The Regional Planning and Development Board

The Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board was created in 1966 by joint resolution of the Boards of Supervisors from the five Central New York counties.[23] Impetus for the creation of the Board came from within the region, with leadership from MDA, though it must be admitted that the state's emphasis on regional planning (through

the Office of Regional Development) certainly had its effect. As John Searles has said, "In this region we responded ... to say if planning was eventually going to be done for us, let us, as five counties, organize, pool our resources, think what we want in the way of highways and other state or federal action, and present our own views through our own regional planning body."[24] The proposal was drawn up by an Interim Committee for Regional Development, consisting of supervisor and citizen members.[25]

The staff of the Regional Planning Board---headed by Executive Director Robert C. Morris---was hampered somewhat during its first year of operation by a shortage of funds. A budget of $50,000 was appropriated by the five Boards of Supervisors for each of the first two years; this was to be supplemented by federal "701" funds. But the granting of these funds was delayed, so the staff's early months were devoted principally to establishing contacts with the various organizations and special-interest planning groups in the region and servicing local planning programs.

In mid-1967, the Regional Planning Board was designated by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development as the areawide reviewing agency under provisions of the Metropolitan Development Act of 1966. This permitted the regional planning staff to review all applications for federal funds from a large number of programs (mostly for physical development projects); no applications from jurisdictions within the region would be approved without comments and recommendations from the Regional Planning Board.[26] Thus, the Board had obtained effective leverage in influencing at least some development decisions in the region.

Now that the Board is fully funded, the staff is proceeding with actual planning activities. Priority is being given to problems which either exist on the regional scale or which have a substantial effect throughout the region.[27] Land use, transportation, and community facilities plans will be prepared. Meanwhile, the staff is also participating in state highway planning and studies of water resources and air pollution.

Executive Director Morris has stated the Board's basic philosophy:

> The Regional Board looks upon planning as a process used in meeting the constantly changing needs of our people. Graphic plans and reports are only by-products of this process, but as such should be specific enough and politically acceptable enough to be useful today, and flexible enough to permit revision and adaptation to tomorrow's needs. The Board's goal is to develop sound plans, prove their feasibility, and promote their acceptance and implementation.[28]

The MIDNY Project

The MIDNY Project was established in mid-1966 by New York State Cooperative Extension, at least partially in response to the creation of the Regional Planning Board. It was funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for three years as a pilot project to explore ways in which Cooperative Extension could improve its effectiveness under urbanizing situations. It was intended that the Project---through its educational activities---complement the regional planning program in encouraging "effective comprehensive planning at all appropriate levels."[29]

Martin G. Anderson, Regional Specialist with the MIDNY Project, summarized four "chasms" the Project is seeking to bridge:

> 1. Current organizations tend to be either highly urban-oriented or rural-farm oriented. Few operate effectively in the broad area between that which is truly urban and that which is still recognizably rural. Yet, in this urban-rural interface we see the greatest conflict and confusion in development.

> 2. The services of USDA agencies have traditionally been farm oriented. Yet the technical information held by these agencies, based on sound research, is applicable to problems in suburbia and exurbia, with proper interpretation.
>
> 3. Communication between organizations which are urban oriented and those which are rural oriented is currently weak.
>
> 4. Communication between professionals with a wide variety of agencies and organizations and professional planners is oftentimes lacking. Also communication between the professionals and lay leadership in the region is not strong.[30]

In its attempts to design and carry out educational activities directed at these conditions, MIDNY has utilized four techniques: (a) providing a flow of information, new planning concepts and ideas, and timely news to various professionals through a series of memos and to a more general public through TV and radio programs; (b) regional meetings and conferences---both large-scale and formal and small-scale and informal; (c) programs carried out in conjunction with the five county Cooperative Extension offices to assist in organizing for planning, develop awareness of major problems, and encourage involvement in the planning process; and (d) work with other agencies and organizations.[31] About the last technique, the Project's 1968-69 plan of work states:

> Many agencies and organizations are involved in the broad area of community development. None have a coordinating responsibility over others. Development is attained by close coordination and cooperation between groups which have a common concern about specific problems or issues. These cooperative arrangements are frequently on an ad hoc basis, generally dissolving once a problem or issue has been resolved. The MIDNY Project makes a contribution where we have expertise or the proper contacts necessary to accomplish an objective. This is viewed as an important part of the overall program....[32]

In all cases, the objectives of the MIDNY Project are to make planning and development in the region more effective through (a) improvements in the understanding of planning, development, and decision-making processes on the part of all relevant people and (b) increased communication

and mutual understanding among those who make important regional decisions. The Project's efforts, however, are strictly educational no attempts are made to take action or promote specific programs.

Conceptions of Development

In summary, then, what have been the approaches of the three agencies to the complexity of regional decision-making, described in the first part of this paper?

In many important ways, MDA and MIDNY have approached the situation with similar philosophies. They have both taken the position that the fundamental problem is not so much a lack of knowledge and information as it is a failure of the many special interests to share their knowledge and information with one another. If this failure were corrected. it is assumed, incompatibility, duplication, and irrationality would be reduced. Thus, both agencies have emphasized the communication-coordination-convener role.

MDA and MIDNY differ, however, in that MDA is more directly action-oriented than MIDNY. Its concerns are with getting things done, with facilitating concrete decisions and actions; various individuals and organizations are convened in order to produce visible results. MIDNY, as an educational project, has vaguer objectives---a vagueness associated with the persistent problem of defining "community development."[33] Whatever the specific definition used, though, the concern is with improving a community's, or a region's, capacity to make decisions. The decisions themselves, their content, and their specific outcomes are of no direct concern to community developers like MIDNY (in contrast to economic or physical developers like MDA, social developers like community action agencies, etc.).

This difference, together with the fact that MDA's focus tends toward the center of the region while MIDNY's tends toward the more rural areas, accounts for the relative infrequency, in fact, of contact between the two agencies. This is not to say either that contact between them is insignificant, that MDA's activities are limited to Onondaga County, or that MIDNY's are limited to the four outlying counties. Nevertheless, MIDNY's relationships with the Regional Planning Board have been much closer than with MDA.

This is true in spite of the subtle but nonetheless real differences in the Planning Board's views of the region and its needs. The Planning Board, to state it briefly, has a view of regional development ---to whatever extent it even uses that term---that derives fairly directly from traditional urban planning theory and practice.

At this point, it becomes necessary to discuss briefly some differences between "planning" and "development."[34] That planning is different from economic development (or even physical development) is not often disputed; planning is more comprehensive. But advocates of community development see their field as comprehensive, too; and the potential for differences of opinion is serious when planners and community developers attempt to work together.

Diagram 1 was prepared by a member of the MIDNY staff, but planners and community developers alike would probably agree that it represents fairly accurately the process in which they are involved. It is interpreted as follows: The ultimate concern is with the community and its decision-makers---some of which are part of the community itself and some of whom come from outside the community (absentee). These are the individuals and organizations the planning or community development

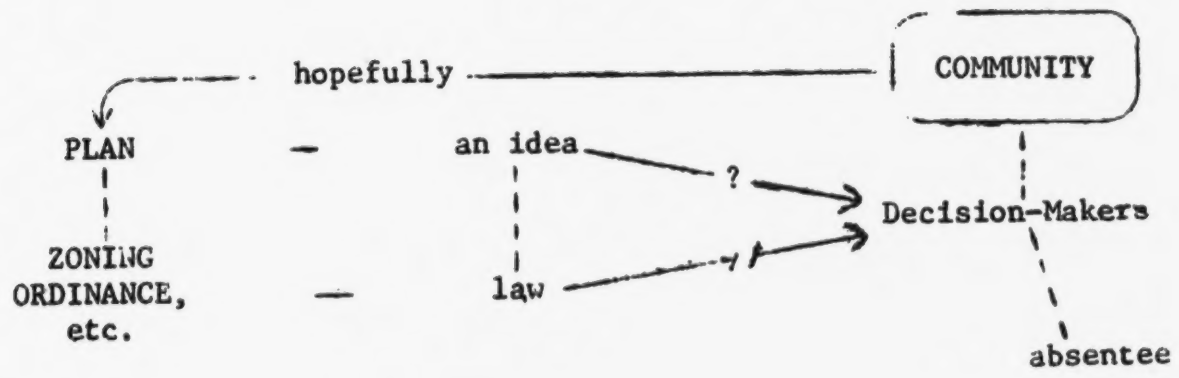

Diagram 1

process seeks to influence. The plan hopefully comes somehow from the community. It is nothing but an idea in people's heads; as such it supposedly (but not necessarily) has some influence on the decision-makers' decisions. The plan can be translated into a zoning ordinance (or some other land-use regulations) through which the decision-makers' decisions would be affected by law. Evidence indicates, however, that this is rarely effective (mostly because zoning variances are granted liberally). One may or may not conclude that alternatives to zoning and related controls are needed.

Now the difference between planners and community developers does not seem to be over whether or not this is the process they are concerned with, but rather over which side of Diagram 1 their respective professions emphasize. MIDNY and other community developers emphasize the community---involvement of people in making plans, developing the capacity of a community to make decisions, facilitating interaction among segments of the community, striving for agreement on community goals and plans, etc. Planning might be seen as one tool among many that might be utilized in these efforts (although most community developers would probably be hard-pressed to specify other tools).

Groups like MDA would probably also emphasize the right side of the diagram---but placing perhaps relatively more emphasis than MIDNY on the "decision-makers" and relatively less on the "community."

Planners, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the left side of the diagram, the plan and various land-use controls. This is not to say, of course, that they are unconcerned with such aspects of the total process as eliciting goals and objectives and implementing the plan. Indeed, these are always listed as "stages" in the planning process. It is also not to say that all planners are alike in this respect, but Executive Director Robert Morris has made it clear that the Regional Planning Board's first priority is the preparation of a regional plan.[35] Morris has, in fact, indicated that he and his Board look to MIDNY to establish and facilitate much of the Board's relationships with the public and various special-interest groups in the region. How much more emphasis the Planning Board would place on the right side of Diagram 1 if MIDNY did not exist is impossible to say, however. "The essential thing is," Morris has said, "we couldn't afford the kind of information program MIDNY is doing for us.... It is going to make our planning job more effective and that much easier."[36]

Given its more traditional, planning orientation, then, what is the Planning Board's response to the complexity of regional decision-making? How does it contrast with the more or less ad hoc facilitator-convener roles assumed by MDA and MIDNY?

The Board actually has few controls available for putting its plans into effect. In New York State, zoning and other land-use controls are primarily in the hands of local government---towns, cities, and villages. Consequently, except for its areawide review function, the Board has no

formal leverage. Through a rationalization of the multi-level system of planning programs (regional, county, local), higher levels can work toward the development of detailed lower-level plans that are consistent with the more general plans at higher levels. Through this process, the Regional Planning Board may eventually see local land-use regulations consistent with local plans which, in turn, are consistent with regional plans. Furthermore, the Regional Planning Board can use its powers of persuasion, and the force of its expertise, to influence decisions by other agencies---federal, state, regional, or sub-regional. It has already exerted successful influence on certain state highway proposals for the region. As Executive Director Morris has pointed out, this capacity for influence is expected to increase once plans are completed. Finally, the Board has placed considerable emphasis on creative use of its review function. "We are using these mandatory reviews in a very broad sense," Morris has said. "We are only required to say, 'you are not conflicting with anything the region is doing, so go ahead.' But we are not limiting our reviews to that." He says the Regional Planning Board wants to help local government obtain state and federal aid and "to call their attention to the activities of another agency with which they may not be familiar and say, 'why don't you get together to see if the two of you can get some economies by working together and supplementing each other's efforts.'"[37]

In spite of these concerns, however, the central thrust of the Regional Planning Board's program is plan preparation. Morris has stressed this on many occasions. While MDA and MIDNY have essentially built their programs around facilitating and coordinating the on-going decision-making process in the region, such efforts are secondary among the Planning

Board's activities. The Board's success, in the long run, will apparently depend heavily on the force of its plans---their "power to stir men's minds."

III. THE MIDNY EXPERIENCE

In the remainder of this paper, I will describe in more detail and as accurately as I can the approach the MIDNY Project has taken in attempting to contribute to the improvement of regional decision-making in Central New York. I hope I can communicate some of the reality of accepting---and working in---environments like those described in general terms by Lindblom and others. I have already noted that the case of Central New York is not to be interpreted as typical; neither is the case of MIDNY typical of the regional agencies working in Central New York. I am devoting this part of the paper to MIDNY simply because it is the agency I work for and, consequently, know most about.

Cooperative Extension and Community Development

MIDNY is one among many steps being taken by Cooperative Extension in New York and similar organizations all across the country to adjust to the changing nature of agriculture. Having existed since the 1910's primarily as an educational service to farmers and farm families, Extension has been confronted in recent years with rapidly declining numbers of farmers and a resulting erosion of its political base. Among its efforts to broaden this base, the organization has been moving rapidly into an area it calls "community resource development," which includes work with rural nonfarm people, suburbanites, and urban audiences as well.

The MIDNY Project, as indicated above, is a key part of these explorations in the adaptation of an old organization to new situations.

These explorations are addressed to some really critical questions, and the answers to them are by no means obvious. Most of the questions have been raised and repeated by critics of Extension. They include: Are urban areas, and planning and development in them, so much more complex than the classic rural community that an organization lacking technical skills in the urban sciences cannot make a significant contribution? Is Extension's orientation to providing specific technical answers to specific technical problems (of agricultural production, for example) inadequate to the interdependent nature of nearly all urban problems? Is the informal, "folksy" approach Extension is most comfortable with not usable in urban situations? Will Extension's contribution be limited to agricultural and other rural inputs into planning and development efforts that have broader focuses (regional, for example)? Will it, in other words, be merely another special-interest group someone else will include in <u>its</u> coordination efforts, or can Extension successfully play a more comprehensive role?

So far, of course, these questions have no answers; MIDNY is one of the attempts to provide them. Roland Warren has summarized the main adjustments Extension will have to make: (a) the shift to the entire population as an audience, including the urban majority; (b) greater emphasis on community, rather than individual, change; (c) determination of a place for Extension in an already crowded field of agencies, organizations, decision-makers; and (d) certain organizational changes.[38] Concerning the last point, Warren notes:

While these structures are already, to a limited extent, beginning

> to reflect the change in functions, they are still suited to the conducting of scientific research in problems of agricultural production and its dissemination to individuals as a basis for improved farm and home management.39

Warren observes the lack of resources suitable to Extension's new role available to Extension agents from colleges of agriculture, and concludes that either new types of specialists will have to be added to the college staffs, or access to sources of information outside the agriculture colleges will have to be found.

He also notes the need for flexible organizational structures in times of change. "A hierarchical structure with a clearly delineated division of labor and fixed channels of authority, communication flow, decision making, and clear flowing operations," Warren writes, "... may get in the way of the optimum use of organizational resources in a field that is characterized by uncertainty and by rapid change."40 He continues:

> Various types of study now point the need for a more fluid structure, particularly since judgments must be made now by ad hoc coalitions of professional people bringing special competencies in new combinations to new problems. In this case, the clearly stated and fixed job descriptions, the channeling of operations through fixed administrative departments and subdivisions, and the clear separation of hierarchical levels, formerly functioning as a protection, can under the changed circumstances become lethal.41

He quotes Victor Thompson:

> Included should be a wide diffusion of uncertainty....
>
> Some overlapping and duplication, some vagueness about jurisdictions, make a good deal of communication necessary (and therefore keep parochialism to a minimum).
>
> If it should prove impossible for organizations to become flexible enough to allow restructuring themselves in the light of the problem at hand, it would be preferable to retain a loose structure in the interest of generating new ideas and suffer from some fumbling in the attempt to coordinate action for the purpose of carrying them out.
>
> The duties and responsibilities approach to job descriptions was designed for a desk class age. It does not accommodate professional work easily.42

Warren concludes:

> At least it is some consolation to know that if the Extension Service is characterized by diffuse uncertainty, vagueness about jurisdictions, fumbling in the attempts to coordinate action, and a lack of clear job descriptions, it can't be all bad![43]

Failure of Rational, Formalized, Pre-planned Approaches to Coordination

I have devoted so much space to Warren's observations because they mirror so exactly the "definition of the situation" held by the MIDNY staff. For similar reasons, I want to further precede my discussion of the MIDNY Project itself with some observations of other, earlier efforts at comprehensive coordination of many diverse, but overlapping organizations.

The MIDNY staff shares with many others the belief that rational, formalized, pre-planned, comprehensive approaches to coordinating the activities of other agencies are impossible, especially in complex, urbanized areas like Central New York. The need for the results at which such attempts aim has been recognized widely, and many efforts have been made. The success of most of them has been questionable at best. Among the most widely-publicized efforts have been the anti-poverty community action programs, some early examples of which are reviewed and evaluated in Dilemmas of Social Reform, by Peter Marris and Martin Rein.[44]

The developers of the programs described by Marris and Rein saw them as responses to "bureaucratic introversion"---the tendency for agencies to develop their own specific programs, settle into routines, and subsequently resist any efforts to alter, broaden, or coordinate their activities.

> To restore their relevance, institutions had to be turned outward again, to look afresh at the needs they should be serving. Only a new agency, detached from the jurisdiction of any conventional department, could reintegrate them effectively, since the causes of poverty were indivisible.[45]

The new agencies actually created took many forms: quasi-public agencies with independent boards; special district governments; offices within mayors', city managers', or other city or county offices; non-governmental, privately-incorporated organizations; etc. Regardless of their forms, the agencies were---with some exceptions---singularly unsuccessful.

> Characteristically, conflicts arose ... over the balance of authority within the planning process, the appointment of a director, or the exclusion of powerful interests. Sometimes they frustrated the project from its inception, blocking any agreement acceptable to the funding agencies; more often, it distracted attention from the development of programmes, or insidiously undermined the project's ideal to save an appearance of community action.[46]

These efforts failed because the agencies to be coordinated all had vested interests in their own programs and enough influence of various types to resist the sacrifices in autonomy and the innovations the new agencies sought to impose. Without tremendous resources---principally financial---with which to provide incentives, the new agencies were powerless to enforce compliance with their plans for coordination. The necessary cooperation was simply not forthcoming, and the new agencies found there was nothing they could do about it.

In contrast to these unsuccessful efforts, Marris and Rein describe the activity of the Kansas City Association of Trusts and Foundations, whose director adopted the informal policy of working quietly and unobtrusively until a potentially valuable agency found itself in financial or other trouble. Then the Association would summon whatever resources

it could, save the struggling agency, and take advantage of the opportunity to manipulate the agency's programs to suit the Association's own more comprehensive conception of needs. Marris and Rein conclude:

> ... the aims of the ... projects may be better realized by discrete political opportunism, than by attempting to induce a coalescence of power. Such a strategy does not create leadership, but unobtrusively supplies it, manipulating the existing structure. It demands no prior commitment, and threatens no jurisdiction. It does not predetermine the targets of reform, or theorize its plans, but exploits its chances. This flexibility makes it less vulnerable, more resilient under attack, and surer of its goals.[47]

The simplicity and reasonableness of such approaches, and their compatibility with the complex, disjointed, incremental nature of decision-making, is not often recognized. Those who propose, those who organize, and those who criticize projects hoping to deal with the lack of coordination persist in demanding comprehensive plans and pre-established umbrella organizations before action aimed at coordination is undertaken.

In fact, an evaluation of the MIDNY Project itself by the U.S. Inspector General's office consistently leveled criticism at the Project's lack of overall plans:

> ...The lack of a long range plan deprived MIDNY officials of the guidance needed to direct and evaluate accomplishments.
>
> ...It was intended [but not realized] that all available agencies and groups be pooled to insure a more comprehensive understanding of the area's problems and needs. This enables the development of a comprehensive plan of operations which outlines the actions and resources needed to insure total resource development.
>
> ...In our opinion, the merits of any projects should be fully evaluated prior to adoption.... This would tend to circumvent any wasted effort or loss of interest due to negative results.
>
> ... In our opinion, the orderly accomplishments of an endeavor with the magnitude of MIDNY requires the mind and labor of all groups. Comprehensive planning should be undertaken to determine each agency's role for total involvement and accomplishment.[48]

As MIDNY's Martin Anderson has written in rebuttal:

> The auditor's references to the need for MIDNY to get all of the agencies and organizations in the region together to bring about coordination and determine areas of responsibility indicate a total lack of understanding of the region. Some executive secretaries of organizations with which we work ... draw salaries several times that of our Extension agents and specialists. I doubt whether they would be terribly impressed by such a blunt approach. Organizations respond favorably to working with us, particularly on an ad hoc basis.... We can only function effectively by finding our niche in the complicated maze of organizations and operating from that position.[49]

In addition to this need to find a place in "the complicated maze of organizations," many agencies such as MIDNY and the Kansas City association referred to by Marris and Rein have found it crucial to avoid the restrictions on activity and potential ad hoc responses that can be produced by commitment to a pre-established plan of action. To quote Marris and Rein again:

> Since we are often very uncertain of the consequences of social action, we need to reduce as far as we can the unknown factors relevant to a decision. The shorter the span of action under review, the less we do not know, and the quicker we shall discover the wisdom of our decisions. Hence, it is much easier to make rational choices if a plan of action is broken down into a series of proximate steps, and the plan is open to revision as each step is completed.... As it will be continually reinterpreted in the light of experience, a precise and inflexible definition of the ultimate goal would only be an encumbrance.... To describe an ultimate purpose is, in both public and private life, an exercise in the analysis of unformed and competing motives, intrinsically tentative and unstable. Social action is thus more an endless exploration than the search for solutions to specific problems. We know where we start from, and in which direction we are heading, but we cannot know where we will end up.[50]

MIDNY's Unwritten Philosophy

Out of the MIDNY experience, then, I have extracted the description that will make up the remainder of this paper. This experience has been heavily conditioned by the staff's recognition of the search for new roles for Extension and the need for loose, flexible, ad hoc approaches

to the demand for coordination. The experience has not been set down in either written objectives or written recapitulations, and it is subject, of course, to continual revision and redirection. Therefore, my task is difficult, and I hope I will be forgiven for inaccuracies. I have done the best I can.[51]

The Project's unwritten philosophy---the implicit basic assumptions generally agreed upon by the staff---includes at least the following points:

1. The staff of the Project has no special expertise, except possibly a share in Extension's traditional expertise as a "convener" of diverse groups and individuals to discuss common problems and educate one another concerning their respective programs, viewpoints, and plans. This may be a slight exaggeration. The Project's staff does include a forester, a geographer, and a political scientist; and the skills of these professions are certainly used. Nevertheless, much of this use is behind-the-scenes, and the tendency is for the staff to direct its audiences to other sources of expertise: professional planners, educators, soil scientists, etc.

2. Largely as a consequence of this first point, the staff places great stress on the involvement of representatives of diverse groups in its various educational activities. While many educational meetings, called to discuss planning and development, attract only those individuals who have consistent interests in these matters, such meetings are criticized by the staff, and attempts are made to avoid them. At a minimum, professional planners are expected to be available, so that interaction between professionals and laymen at least are facilitated. Representatives of various special interests are encouraged to attend, depending on the subject-matter of the meeting.

A series of regional conferences on land use, held in the spring of 1967, provide useful examples.[52] A conference on agricultural land use involved professional planners, farmers, representatives of several USDA agencies, and personnel from the College of Agriculture. A second conference, on forestry and recreational land uses, brought together planners, foresters, wildlife biologists, recreation developers, and others. A third conference, on urban uses of land, involved planners, real estate people, education administrators, and others. Finally, all of these interests, plus elected officials and other interested citizens, were reassembled in a large-scale, day-long conference at which presentations were made and discussed on all three major categories of land use.

3. Despite the emphasis on involvement of diverse interests, MIDNY has made no serious efforts to involve the "general public," the poor, or any minority groups. The general feeling is that (a) the staff and its resources are too limited to tackle these groups, and (b) there is sufficient room for accomplishment simply in the matter of extending and improving leader involvement. It is perhaps accurate to say the staff recognizes two needs: one, to make it possible for every individual who would want to become involved to do so, and second, to help inform those leaders who do make decisions of the unarticulated and unmet needs of minority groups and average citizens. In all honesty, it must be admitted, however, that progress toward the second objective has been slight. The objectives reflect what I believe to be a realistic assessment of the level of interest most people have in public affairs.[53] The MIDNY staff sees this low level of interest as generally justified, and efforts to "correct" it as not worth the price.

4. The staff looks upon professional planners partly as collaborators in its educational activities and partly as another audience. While looking upon the planning process as desirable, and planners as both public servants (to direct audiences to) and experts (to be utilized as educators in their own right), the MIDNY staff is also aware of the subtle differences between community development and community planning discussed in Part II. If a planner does, in fact, focus his attention on plan preparation---at the expense of direct involvement with the community---and MIDNY is, at the same time, successful in motivating various individuals and interest groups to become involved in planning, the potential for conflict between MIDNY and the planners is obvious. The conflict has not emerged---at least not yet. Discussions, both formal and informal, between MIDNY and the region's professional planners have continued, and relationships have been good. Hopefully, a mutual education process will take place.

5. The research and informational content of MIDNY's educational program is seen as important at least as much for its role in stimulating discussion and interaction as for its purely educational purposes. Members of the staff have jokingly said that, in making a presentation before an audience, it really doesn't matter what you say, just so long as a discussion follows. There is an element of truth in this. The primary source of education is expected to come, not from lectures by experts, but from interactions among the diverse individuals and groups assembled at the meeting. The ultimate objective is improved decision-making. Information from a lecture may help, but ideas and information gleaned from other decision-makers is thought to be at least equally important.

6. Related to this is the conviction, endemic in Cooperative Extension, that its activities are purely educational, and not attempts to "push" or "sell" any particular position on specific issues. As members of the staff itself have pointed out, it is impossible to avoid bias completely; advocacy of certain positions is practically always at least implicit. Nevertheless, objectivity is clearly the objective, and efforts are nearly always made either to present both sides of an issue, or at least emphasize that other sides exist.

7. Finally, the Project's unwritten philosophy certainly must deal with the question of stated objectives and plans of action. According to the Inspector General's audit of the Project, basic objectives were not so much missing as ignored. The auditors' report cited nine objectives, which were derived from the Project's proposal and dealt with such concerns as the creation of awareness among rural people of urban growth patterns affecting them, the involvement of rural and urban people in planning for the conversion of land to urban purposes, assistance to communities in the utilization of state and federal assistance programs, etc.[54] The auditors implied (sometimes correctly, sometimes not) that these objectives are not being met; they also charged that the staff has set aside these objectives in favor of an overriding one too vague and general to be meaningful: "to design and carry out research-based educational programs which will result in effective comprehensive planning at all appropriate levels."

All this is fundamentally true, but what the auditors did not realize was that the staff's use of objectives has been even more haphazard than they imagined! In reality, the objectives have been revised repeatedly---sometimes formally, usually informally, and sometimes only

implicitly. What generally happens is that the staff devotes its time and attention to specific projects and day-to-day activities with virtually no reference at all to objectives; this is probably true the majority of the time, but periodically objectives are taken off the shelf, possibly reformulated, and the Project's actual recent performance evaluated against them. If the performance seems poor or misdirected in comparison, future plans are adjusted accordingly. In short, objectives are used only to point the staff in the right directions, as an aid in making quick decisions, and as something to communicate to other groups when they want to know what MIDNY's objectives are. Under no circumstances are failures to meet an objective traumatic.

The Unwritten Manual of Procedures

As the MIDNY Project was originally conceived, two Regional Specialists, physically located in Syracuse, would be responsible for contacts with individuals and groups in the region and for developing and carrying out the Project's educational program. They would be assisted by two Extension Associates, located on the Cornell University campus in Ithaca; these men would be responsible for transmitting research inputs from Cornell and other institutions and for other assistance. In addition, a distinction was made in both pairs between an "urban-oriented" man and a "rural-oriented" man.[55]

As the Project has proceeded, and the skills and limitations of each staff member have been learned, the division of labor has become much more informal. The urban-rural distinctions have been found almost totally irrelevant. The program responsibility-assistance distinction has been maintained, but the specific tasks falling to each man have been subject

to specific decisions as each staff activity is taken up. Usually, these decisions have been easy to make; each staff member has certain interests, knowledge, and ability, and these are generally known and implicitly agreed upon. There are generally only minor questions about who does what.

MIDNY's educational activities are developed out of the staff's perceptions of audience needs, which are in turn conditioned by (a) the Specialists' contacts with community leaders, decision-makers, and representatives of various agencies and organizations in the region and (b) research findings and theories, filtered through the Extension Associates and communicated to the rest of the staff via memorandums, staff meetings, or informal conversations. Actual requests for programs are usually expressed in very general terms; the specific content of the activities is largely a matter of staff decision, though possibly in consultation with professional planners or others who might be included in the activity.

Needs recognized during the first year and a half of the Project included:

1. Development of a "sense of region." While the creation of the Regional Planning Board indicated that the interrelatedness of all five counties was no secret, the spreading and reinforcement of this feeling was deemed important. Responses by the MIDNY Project included a bus tour of newly-urbanizing parts of the region for leaders from throughout the five counties, a region-wide conference on land use, and references in single-county meetings to the entire region and the position in the region of the county in question.

2. Initiation of local planning programs where none currently exist. With the exception of a series of meetings in Cortland County on the pros

and cons of county planning, few direct efforts were made to meet these needs. In Cortland, Madison, and Oswego Counties---where there were no county planning boards---MIDNY's approach was generally to enter, and possibly manipulate, coalitions of groups seeking the adoption of county planning. In Oswego County, the groups included the county economic development association and the State University College at Oswego. In Cortland and Madison Counties, the coalition tended to be more informal, and included Extension agents, Supervisors, college personnel, local planning board members, and other interested citizens. These coalitions attempted to devise and carry out strategies attuned to local political conditions, the positions of the various Supervisors, and their susceptibility to change.

3. Contact among individuals and organizations with potential common interests, but few previous contacts. This, as noted before, was usually accomplished through invitations of diverse representatives to meetings, conferences, bus tours, etc. Meetings of various professionals to hear reports of new research and the small-scale preliminary conferences on agricultural, recreational, and urban land uses (at which the information to be reported out at the main regional conference was discussed) are examples. In Cayuga County, a commercial-farm mapping project involved farmers, professional planners, and several USDA agencies.[56]

4. Training of Extension agents in community development. Given the changes called for in Cooperative Extension's traditional organization, this need continually underlay most of MIDNY's activities. The joint development of county educational activities by MIDNY and the county agents served, at least as much as formal training programs, to reorient the agents and help them feel comfortable and competent in a new subject-matter area.

A fifth perceived need---to make research findings available to those who can use them---was emphasized at first, but has since been deemphasized. It was originally intended that the Project would even stimulate new research on regional problems it felt were in need of investigation. Experience, however, has proven this unworkable because of (a) the time lapse between the inception of a research project and the availability of its results, (b) the lack of perfect fit between a researcher's personal needs and those perceived by MIDNY, and (c) the substantial gap between basic research and information that can be readily applied.

Instead of any efforts at direct utilization of research, the staff has tended to focus entirely on program needs and to look for research resources only after the program needs are agreed upon. (There are, however, continued efforts to make appropriate professionals aware of new research reports once they are available, and to facilitate cooperation between researchers and relevant individuals and organizations in the region.) The tendency to employ the Extension Associates directly in educational activities has been stronger than it was originally intended; it has been found that they are often better able to communicate research to the Project's audiences than the researchers themselves. This stems partly from the fact that they have closer contacts with audience needs and levels of understanding, and partly from the fact that they can combine findings from many diverse research efforts in order to meet specific program needs. To meet these demands, the Associates have placed considerable emphasis on keeping generally informed of research at Cornell and elsewhere (as reported in journals, at conferences, etc.). The research that they are familiar with is dependent, of course, on their own

personal interests and also on their interpretation of present and potential Project program needs.

A final, but major, step in MIDNY's procedures is the evaluation of "next steps." As Marris and Rein indicated in their discussion of community action programs, an appropriate agency response to complexity and difficulty is to take only small steps, so that action, evaluation, and the necessary adjustments in action are not widely separated in time. MIDNY has generally followed this approach, spending considerable time discussing past activities, criticizing them, speculating on how they might be improved, and making modifications in new activities. In spite of the importance of this process, it has only rarely been formalized---as in a staff meeting. It is done most often, and perhaps most effectively, in informal conversations---now and then with the entire staff but frequently with only two or three members. Typical locations are in the car enroute between Syracuse and Ithaca, at lunch, over a cup of coffee, or in a meeting room after the meeting has been adjourned.

The process can be partially illustrated by a series of 12 meetings in Cayuga County---three each in four locations. The first cluster of four meetings was to discuss the relationship of the respective area of the county to the county as a whole, to the region, and to broader social and economic conditions and trends. The second cluster was to discuss natural resources, and the third, programs available to meet some of the problems identified in the first two clusters.

Following the first cluster of meetings, at which Extension Associate Alan Hahn made the main presentation, Hahn wrote in a memo to the rest of the staff: "The most obvious [weakness], as I see it, was the failure to attract a wider audience. Those who attended were the same people who

have been attending the County Planning Board workshops.... If we want bankers and real estate men and farmers and businessmen (those not already in the planning game) we will have to offer programs of special interest to them." [57] A subsequent memo from Martin Anderson to the Cayuga County agent suggested accelerated efforts to encourage greater and more representative attendance, and made specific recommendations.[58]

After attendance dropped considerably at the second cluster of meetings, Extension Associate Lyle Raymond (who had moderated a panel of speakers at each of these meetings) suggested to the staff that there was little popular interest in natural resources. "I think [people] are much more worried over the trends in urbanization which cause problems of more concern to local government right now. I doubt that this complacency about natural resources is justified, but that is what the situation seems to be." [59] He suggested not including natural resources as a specific topic in future meetings. Among the responses was a decision to alter plans for a subsequent series of meetings in Onondaga County. Instead of duplicating the Cayuga County format, two meetings, instead of three, were planned, with Hahn and Raymond collaborating on the first one; Raymond's contribution concerned the shift of land from rural to urban purposes instead of natural resources.

In addition, when attendance remained low at the third cluster of meetings in Cayuga County, the discussion was directed to such questions as the lack of interest in planning and community development, why so few people come to meetings, and what can be done to increase interest and attendance in the future. At the conclusion of the series, Anderson drafted another memo discussing the degree of success, the problem of low attendance, and some suggestions for future programs.[60] The Project's next

Plan of Work included a section on the need for different types of programs for communities at different levels of planning organization.[61] Among the proposals were programs on specific topics (the pros and cons of industrial development, the problems of raising tax revenues, etc.) intended to appeal to specific groups that had not been reached to date.

In addition to the involvement of more diverse groups, other new needs recognized by the Project staff include:

1. Information on "do-it-yourself" planning in order to give direction to newly-formed local planning boards, for whom federal planning assistance grants are not available and whose members want to know what they can do now. These needs have been recognized not only by MIDNY and the planning boards themselves, but also by many professional planners who appreciate the shortage of both funds and planners. The advantage in local people who have themselves studied at least some aspects of their communities have not, of course, been lost on the community developers either.

2. The development of understanding and empathy on the part of white suburban and rural audiences of the dilemmas and frustrations of people living in urban ghettoes.

3. Programs to meet the needs of communities that already have comprehensive plans, but are concerned over failure to implement them.

4. The provision of assistance to the Regional Planning Board in involving many groups and individuals in the preparation of a statement of goals and objectives, on which to base the regional plan.

These are only examples of recent developments in the Project's constant evolution of perceived needs and activities to meet those needs. The process is continual, and as new activities are completed, perceived needs are reevaluated, and plans for still newer activities are revised.

The Disjointed Incremental Man

The results of a project like MIDNY depend more on the personal and personality characteristics of its employees than on statements of firm objectives (against which performance can be evaluated), clear job descriptions, etc. Therefore, I am devoting the last section of this paper to some notes on the kinds of people who have been chiefly responsible for MIDNY's activities---especially Regional Specialist Martin Anderson.[62] Significant characteristics include:

1. A quality that might be called "critical optimism." There is a definite tendency to be generally optimistic about the Project's activities. "We're making progress; we're gaining acceptance; we're on the right track." As Anderson has noted, if you're not optimistic, you could lose your mind. However, this optimism is constantly tempered by self-criticism. I referred to this in the last section. Questions are continually raised: "are we really on target? are we failing to meet important needs? can we improve our approaches? how can we do it better the next time?"

This mixture of optimism and criticism is stimulated to a large extent by the nature of inputs and outputs in educational programs. There is a natural desire to see concrete, visible results of educational efforts, yet it is obvious that many of the greatest gains lie in attitude changes that are effective only in their subtle impacts on decisions made at some time in the indefinite future. They also are mixed with other diverse inputs into the same future decisions, so it becomes completely impossible to say exactly what effect any particular educational program had. Furthermore, information picked up by those who attend educational meetings may or may not be passed on to others, so that even the actual

size of an audience is no accurate measure of the number of individuals actually reached. As a consequence, evaluations of performance are never clearcut matters of success or failure. There is no way to know for sure whether one should be an optimist or a pessimist.

2. Much of Anderson's activity can be described as that of a "broker" in ideas, contacts, sources of assistance, etc. His mind often seems to be a reservoir of information about what various individuals and groups are doing, planning, considering, needing. In his many formal and informal contacts throughout the region, he may be told of one group's need and immediately know of a possible resource to meet the need. He may learn of two group's with similar interests or potentially conflicting---or complementing---proposals, and he will suggest a meeting between them. Little of this activity is carefully planned; much of it is serendipitous---it just happens as Anderson moves about Central New York attending meetings, having lunch with someone, stopping by an office, or meeting on the sidewalk.

3. Another function Anderson performs, which may be quite important, is that of a summarizer. At a meeting, he may at various points attempt to sum up what has been said so far. More often, he may draft a memo following the meeting, which summarizes the meeting's major points as he sees them. Not only is this a useful communication device, but it may also serve to redirect other people's thinking, call attention to points or issues MIDNY feels should be emphasized, or divert attention from aspects that might hinder cooperation or resolution of a problem.

4. Work like MIDNY's also requires a willingness and ability to keep on learning. Related to this is a touch of humility, the capacity to admit you were wrong (sometimes even when you think you were right). Any attempt to be comprehensive in a complex situation that is constantly

changed by ad hoc decisions rather than grand designs obviously places an agency in situations where it has no answers, hasn't done its homework, and has to turn to others for information and other assistance. Furthermore, with an organization like Cooperative Extension seeking a place in an already crowded field of other organizations, there are also dangers of conflicts with other groups, and of antagonizing others by appearing to be trying to usurp their functions. With coordination as the ultimate objective, such dangers can be critical.

5. In an environment, and with an approach, like MIDNY's nothing is ever settled! The effort, of course, is to constantly move toward goals; but, then, the goals are always shifting. Add to this the vagueness of the results, and the indefiniteness of the Project's contribution to them, and it becomes obvious that work like MIDNY's is no place for a person who likes neatness, visible results, and the satisfaction of seeing a job well done! One has to be able to live with looseness, flexibility, instability, and little convincing reassurance that you really are getting somewhere.

6. Finally, work on the Project requires sufficient breadth to be able to respond to a vast variety of demands with knowledge of at least where to turn for the proper information. The staff members appear to have acquired the breadth they have through different channels--Anderson from experience in community development, Raymond from the field of geography (which has breadth built in), and Hahn from study in several social science disciplines; this fact, in itself, may be an additional advantage. Commitments to special ideas, goals, concepts, etc. is also dangerous, since the constant need to react to the shifting focus and character of regional decision-making usually renders such ideas, goals, concepts, etc. irrelevant before they are utilized or attained.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This, then, is at least a partial description of how one regional development agency attempts to cope with the complexity and disjointed, incremental nature of regional decision-making. What kind of regional development "system" will emerge when, and if, MIDNY and the Regional Planning Board become well-established is not clear at this time. A division of labor---informal, to be sure---with the Planning Board leaning toward plan preparation and up-dating, MIDNY toward the generation of interest and involvement, and MDA toward "getting things done"---is a possibility. The all-important convener-communicator-coordinator role might be played jointly by all three agencies. They might be joined by others, too; social planning, for instance, would appear to be a vital area not yet filled by an agency covering all five counties.

However, in the light of experience to date, this picture looks altogether too neat and tidy. The never-ending progression of ad hoc, incremental, only partly coordinated decisions is more likely to evolve patterns of coordination and accommodation and not yet imagined.

Furthermore, there is not even any real assurance that the directions in which the emerging regional development "system" appears to be moving at present are the right directions. The abandonment of rational, formalized, pre-planned, comprehensive strategies (if, in fact, they have been abandoned) is a reaction to the tendency (in one writer's words) to try to achieve a world as it ought to be by proceeding with approaches to influencing decision-making that implicitly assume the world already <u>is</u> as it ought to be.[63] While there are resistances to this abandonment, agreement is certainly more readily achieveable here than on the question of whether the approach adopted by MIDNY is the right alternative.

MIDNY is, after all, only an experimental project; and the members of its staff take that fact seriously. Selecting directions which seem, on the basis of information at hand, to be the right directions, and pursuing them until they seem to be, in fact, the wrong directions, the staff obviously thinks its alternative to the Grand Design approach is the correct choice. But the staff would also be the first to admit that they know much more about what not to do than what to do instead.

Footnotes

1. Charles Lindblom has described the "strategy of disjointed incrementalism" in David Braybrooke and Charles E. Lindblom, A Strategy of Decision (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963).

2. A Profile of Central New York (Syracuse: Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse and Onondaga County and Syracuse Governmental Research Bureau, Inc., 1966). Other sources of description of the region include: T. Ledyard Blakeman, A Regional Planning and Development Board for Central New York (Syracuse: Interim Committee on Regional Development, 1965) and Barclay G. Jones, Gordon H. Jacobs, Emil E. Malizia, and Phaichitr Uathavikul, Sectoral Response to Secular Change: Indications of Opportunity Loss in a Regional Economy (Ithaca: Cornell University Center for Housing and Environmental Studies, 1967).

3. Pierre Clavel, "Regional Variation and Development Agency Design," Summary Mock Report of the Major Task, Cornell-Penn State Regional Organization Study, Ithaca, March 1, 1968, p.4. Clavel refers to Frank Young, "A Proposal for Cooperative Cross-Cultural Research on Intervillage Systems," Human Organization, 25 (Spring 1966), pp. 46-50.

4. The information on population history, as well as much of the other descriptive material in this report, is derived from research and observation by the staff of the MIDNY Project, New York State Cooperative Extension.

5. The decision-making system of Syracuse and Onondaga County was described and analyzed earlier in Roscoe C. Martin, Frank J. Munger, and others, Decisions in Syracuse (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1961).

6. E.A. Lutz, "Summary of Some Conclusions Concerning Local Governments in New York State and the Syracuse Region," mimeo, Ithaca, 1967.

7. A Profile of Central New York, pp. 47-51.

8. See "Creative Federalism," Syracuse Metropolitan Review, 1:8 (April 1968), pp. 3-4+.

9. A Profile of Central New York, pp. 21-26.

10. "1967 Membership Directory," Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse and Onondaga County, 1967.

11. For a list of some of these organizations, especially those in Syracuse and Onondaga County, see "Public Affairs Organizations," Event 7 (Summer 1967), pp. 44-47. Much of this information is also derived from contacts with the organizations by the MIDNY Project staff.

12. Barclay Jones, James Finley, Dennis Rondinelli, and Howard Foster, "Local Governmental Organization for Development Planning," Mock

Project Report, Task G, Cornell-Penn State Regional Organization Study, Ithaca, Feb. 26, 1968, pp. 12-13. For the term, "partisan mutual adjustment," Rondinelli refers to Charles E. Lindblom, The Intelligence of Democracy (New York: The Free Press, 1965).

13. The concept of solidarity is discussed in Clavel, op.cit., and Clavel, "Designing Organizational Machinery for Regional Development," paper presented to Agricultural Economics Seminar, Cornell University, Ithaca, Oct. 2, 1967.

14. Some of this shift of functions from city to county is described in Martin, Munger, and others, op. cit.

15. The information on commuting is derived from research by the MIDNY Project staff.

16. Clavel, "Designing Organizational Machinery," p. 8.

17. MDA (Syracuse: Metropolitan Development Association of Syracuse and Onondaga County, n.d.), n.p.

18. "Questions and Discussion," Proceedings: Review of Community Resource Development in Central New York by the Secretary of Agriculture (Ithaca: MIDNY Project, Cooperative Extension, 1968), n.p.

19. MDA.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.

23. Robert C. Morris, "Planning the Region of Central New York," Event, 7:4 (Summer 1967), pp. 33-39.

24. John R. Searles, "Prelude to Regional Planning," in Proceedings, n.p.

25. Blakeman, op. cit.

26. Morris, "RPDB Coordination of Federal Aid in Central New York," Memorandum No. 20 to the Regional Planning Board, June, 1967.

27. Morris, "Planning the Region of Central New York," pp. 34-35.

28. Ibid., p.35.

29. Martin G. Anderson, "A Hasty Analysis of the MIDNY Project," memorandum to James Thornton, Assistant to the Secretary of Agriculture, October 17, 1967.

30. Anderson, 'Education for Planning,' in Proceedings, n.p.

31. Anderson,"MIDNY Project: Quarterly Report, January-March 1968," memorandum to James Preston, March 29, 1968.

32. "Work Plan, 1968-1969," MIDNY Project, Cooperative Extension, Syracuse, n.d.

33. See David Popenoe, "Community Development and Community Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, 33:4 (July 1967), pp.259-265.

34. The ideas set forth in the next three paragraphs, while by no means entirely orginal, are not taken specifically from any other writer. I point this out in order to absolve Mr. Popenoe and others from responsibility for them.

35. Annual Report, 1966 (Syracuse: Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board, 1967).

36. "Questions and Discussion,' in Proceedings, n.p.

37. Ibid.

38. Roland L. Warren, "Views of an Extension Administrator (C.R. Harrington): Discussion," in Resource Issues and the Planning Process, Proceedings of the Joint Meeting of Northeast Regional Committee and the Extension Public Policy Committee, Boston, Oct. 11-13, 1966, p. 74.

39. Warren, p.79.

40. Warren, pp. 79-80.

41. Warren, p.80.

42. Warren, p. 81. Warren's reference is to Victor A. Thompson, "Bureaucracy and Innovation," Administrative Science Quarterly, 10:1 (June 1965), pp. 11, 15, 17, 19.

43. Warren, p.81.

44. Peter Marris and Martin Rein, Dilemmas of Social Reform (New York: Atherton Press, 1967).

45. Ibid., p. 53

46. Ibid., p. 149.

47. Ibid., p. 162.

48. Marvin Rosen, Regional Inspector General, Audit of the MIDNY Project, mimeo, pp. 7, 8, 9, 10.

49. Anderson, letter to Dr. Edward H. Smith, Director, Cooperative Extension, March 22, 1968.

50. Marris and Rein, p. 204.

51. In the following account, I have not discussed a set of major personnel difficulties, which eventually resulted in the dismissal of one of the two Regional Specialists. While the impact of these difficulties on the Project cannot be denied, I consider it inappropriate for me to discuss them. The central thrust of the Project, and the validity of the following account, is not seriously affected.

52. Anderson, "Education in Land Use Planning (A Case Study Report on Obtaining Involvement, Support, and Understanding of Comprehensive Planning Through Cooperative Extension Educational Efforts)," MIDNY Project, mimeo, July 1, 1967.

53. Alan J. Hahn, "Planning and the Common Man," memorandum to MIDNY staff and friends, April 24, 1967.

54. Rosen, op. cit., p. 2.

55. See New York State Cooperative Extension Service, Five-County Community and Resource Development Proposal (Ithaca: New York State Colleges of Agriculture and Home Economics, 1966?).

56. Lyle Raymond, "Agricultural Land Use Mapping," article prepared for use in Farm & Home News, April 12, 1968.

57. Hahn,"Some Thoughts after the Cayuga County Meetings," memorandum to MIDNY staff and Fran Vuillemot, Feb. 16, 1968.

58. Anderson, "Some General Suggestions Based on Participation in Meeting at Moravia and Limited Contacts with Al Hahn and Others Since Then," memorandum to Fran Vuillemot, Feb. 22, 1968.

59. Raymond, "Comments on the Meetings Held to Discuss Natural Resources in Cayuga County," memorandum to MIDNY staff, March 18, 1968.

60. Anderson, "Critique of the Winter Series of Meetings in Cayuga County," memorandum to Fran Vuillemot, April 16, 1968.

61. "Work Plan, 1968-1969," p. 2.

62. Differences of opinion on these matters had much to do with the personnel difficulties mentioned in footnote 51.

63. Robert Morris and Martin Rein, "Emerging Patterns in Community Planning," in Bernard J. Frieden and Robert Morris, eds., Urban Planning and Social Policy (New York: Basic Books, 1968), p. 25. (This Robert Morris and the executive director of the Central New York Regional Planning Board are different men.)

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